

35. (New)

A process according to claim 1, wherein the process consists essentially of said steps a), b), and c).

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35. (New)

A process according to claim 1, wherein the aqueous solution contacted with the cation exchanger in step a) comprises at least 5.5% of the water-soluble lactate salt.

REMARKS

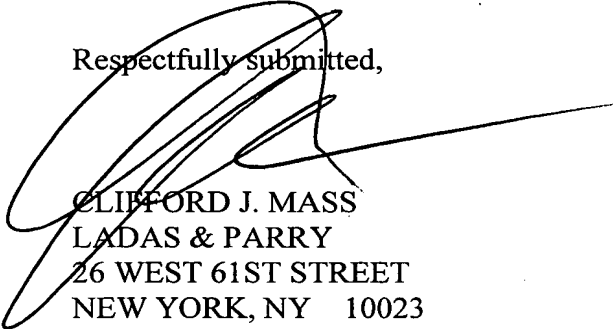
The above amendatory action is taken more completely to define the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention. The recitations in the new claims are supported by Examples 1 - 4 which appear in the specification as filed at pages 13 - 16. In particular, the lower limit for the percent concentration of the water-soluble lactate salt appears in Example 2 on page 14 of the specification. ($5.9 \text{ mmol lactate} \times 112\text{g/mol} = .661\text{g}$; $.661\text{g}/12\text{g} \times 100\% = 5.5\%$.)

The new claims patentably distinguish over the cited art for the reasons discussed in Applicants' Amendment dated May 4, 2001. In addition, claim 35 distinguishes over the cited in that the transitional phrase "consists essentially of" precludes the electrodialysis step which the primary reference (Glassner) teaches to be essential. Claim 36 further distinguishes over the cited art in that the prior art does not treat an aqueous solution comprising at least 5.5% of a water-soluble lactate salt.

In view of the above, a favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is again

respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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